

## **SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 390 PUBLISHED ON 3 JUNE 2023**

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 27 May to 3 June 2023 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least four (4) people were murdered during this period in different parts of the country.

The report also deplores the cases of two (2) young secondary school girls who were tortured by Imbonerakure in the province of Gitega and of one (1) CNL (National Congress for Freedom) activist who was arbitrarily detained following a slanderous denunciation by a hill leader in the province of Rumonge.

### **1. Violations of the right to life**

- On the morning of Sunday 28 May 2023, the decomposing body of a man known as Rukata was discovered in a tree plantation on the Sampeke hill in the commune of Kayogoro of the Makamba province (southern Burundi), some 4 km from his home on the same hill.

According to witnesses to the macabre discovery, the body of Rukata, an activist of the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy) party, had been amputated of its genitals by unidentified individuals. He had been missing since the evening of Wednesday 24 May, when he left with customers who had intended to buy eucalyptus wood from him at his plantation on the same hill.

The same sources said that the victim's body was buried on the spot by Red Cross volunteers on the orders of the local administration.

- On the night of Saturday 28 May 2023, a certain Sagamba, a member of the Imbonerakure youth league affiliated to the ruling CNDD-FDD party, was clubbed to death by other Imbonerakure on night patrol on the Muzye hill and zone, in the commune of Giharo of the Rutana province (south-east Burundi).

According to local sources, Sagamba was caught stealing beans in a field and tried to flee before being clubbed to death on the Nyesasa football field by the enraged Imbonerakure who had set off in pursuit.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the abuses committed throughout the country by the Imbonerakure, who think they can do whatever they like because of the impunity surrounding most of their crimes, particularly since the CNDD-FDD party came to power. It is calling for a credible and independent judicial enquiry to determine the perpetrators of the murders and bring them to justice.

- On the afternoon of Tuesday 30 May 2023, at around 5 p.m., the lifeless body of a man in his fifties was discovered by farmers on the 4<sup>th</sup> transverse road in the Gasenyi zone, in the Buganda commune of the Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi), close to the Rusizi river separating Burundi from the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo).

According to witnesses to the macabre discovery, the body of this father of 5 children had been decapitated by unidentified individuals. Local residents confirmed that he had left home very early to tend his watermelon field less than a kilometre from the Rusizi river, and that his family had waited in vain for him to return.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores an upsurge in cases of violations of the right to life in several parts of the country and calls for thorough and impartial investigations to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

- On Wednesday 31 May 2023, the lifeless body of Daniel Nahindavyi, aged 66, was found in a small bush on the Fota hill, not far from the offices of the commune of Ndava, in the province of Mwaro (central Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the body of Daniel Nahindavyi, from the Mahaganya hill in the Nyabihanga commune in the same province, was tied up, killed elsewhere and then dumped at the place where it was discovered to conceal the crime.

## 2. Violations of the right to physical integrity and gender-based violence

- Information received by SOS-Torture Burundi reveals that on 22 May 2023, at around 9 p.m., two young girls, Médiatrice Irankunda, aged 18, and Sierra Iteriteka, aged 17, were severely beaten in the political capital of Gitega (central Burundi) by two Imbonerakure known as Don Divin Nduwimana and Jean Pierre Nkurunziza for refusing to sleep with them.

According to local sources, Médiatrice Irankunda, a pupil at the Lycée Christ-Roi in Mushasha in the 2<sup>ème</sup> year of the Telecommunications Computing Section, and Sierra Iteriteka, a pupil at the Lycée de la COMIBU<sup>1</sup> in the 2<sup>ème</sup> year of the Science Section, were taken to a place of "correction", These two Imbonerakure severely tortured them with large sticks to punish them for refusing to sleep with them. The two victims suffered serious injuries to their backs and legs and were admitted to the Ubuzima medical polyclinic in the Yoba district of Gitega for intensive care.

According to the same sources, Don Divin Nduwimana, a grassroots administrative officer well known for his night-time blunders during Imbonerakure patrols, and Jean Pierre Nkurunziza, a driver with the Anti-Corruption Brigade, were arrested the day after the double crime by the police and are being held at the provincial police station in Gitega.

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<sup>1</sup> Burundi's Muslim community.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for the two Imbonerakure to be punished in accordance with the law and for the two young girls who were tortured to be fairly compensated for their physical and psychological suffering.

### **3. Infringement of the right to freedom of movement: arrest and pre-trial detention**

- On 31 May 2023, a CNL party activist known as Augustin Hicuburundi was arbitrarily sentenced to one year's penal servitude and a fine of twenty-five thousand Burundi francs (25,000 BuF) in a flagrante delicto trial by the Tribunal de Grande Instance in Rumonge (south-west Burundi) on false accusations of beating his wife spread by the chief of the hill of Kagongo in the Kizuka zone, in the commune and province of Rumonge.

According to witnesses, Augustin Hicuburundi's wife, who had been summoned to the trial, strongly denied having been beaten by her husband, but this did not prevent the judges sitting in open court from convicting him solely on the basis of a slanderous denunciation contained in the report produced by the head of the college.

The same sources said that the couple had failed to explain clearly the existence of a conflict between the victim and the hill chief of Kagongo, who had vowed revenge.

SOS-Torture Burundi is asking the minister responsible for justice to do everything in her power to put an end to the abuses committed by certain magistrates who use the justice system for political or personal ends.



## SOS – Torture/Burundi

*Monitoring sur les cas de torture, les arrestations arbitraires, les disparitions forcées et les exécutions sommaires au Burundi*

SOS-Torture/Burundi was initiated with the aim of informing national and international opinion about the serious human rights violations taking place in Burundi through monitoring reports on torture, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, sexual violence and summary executions.

This initiative to inform on the realities of the country followed the carnage of a hundred people killed during the day of 11 December and 12 December 2015 by police and military under the pretext of pursuing rebels who had just attacked military camps on the outskirts of the capital.

The affected areas are said to be contesting the third term of President Nkurunziza, namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga and Jabe, the last two being located in the centre of Bujumbura city.